

the rising of the moon  
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The Rising of the Moon is a work intended by Gregory to sympathize with the socialist cause. Not only does "The Rising of the Moon" serve to reiterate the Man's position as an escaped political prisoner, it reflects the socialist beliefs of Gregory. The Man's parting words with the Sergeant have revolutionary undertones, "Well, good-night, comrade, and thank you. You did me a good turn to-night, and I'm obliged to you. Maybe I'll be able to do as much for you when the small rise up and the big fall down...when we all change places at the rising of the Moon" (Gregory 57). The Man refers to the Sergeant as his "comrade," a word often associated with socialist rhetoric. The Man's comment "when the small rise up and the big fall down" suggests the inevitable revolution Socialists claim will take place when the proletariat (workers) would overthrow the bourgeoisie (owners). It is through the disguised man that the Sergeant is able to reveal his true self, the self of his youth.

The Man says to the Sergeant, "Sergeant, I am thinking it was with the people you were, and not with the law you were, when you were a young man" (Gregory 55). The Sergeant's true identity, like the man, was disguised. Instead of a wig and beard to disguise himself, however, he had hidden his inner self behind the law. He no longer exhibited his youthful ambitions, which before his change of heart he referred to as being, "foolish then, that time's gone" (Gregory 55). Eventually as they converse, the Sergeant reveals his true self; he is free from the constraints of being a representative of the law. The Sergeant is able to embrace this newfound sense of compassion and thanks the Man for enlightening him. He says, "It's a pity! It's a pity! You deceived me! You deceived me well" (Gregory 56).

Through calling the Man's deception "well," the Sergeant is already hinting that the conversation had changed him. That is why when the cops show up, the Sergeant does not reveal the Man as the escaped prisoner.

This elaborate change in attitude can be contrasted with the beginning of the Man and the Sergeant's conversation. Before he found out the Man's true identity he states, "Don't talk to me like that. I have my duties and I know them" (Gregory 55). Yet by the conclusion of the play, the Sergeant is complicit with the Man by hiding his hat and wig from the officers. It is clearly seen that his duties toward serving the law are no longer important to him. The act of the Sergeant handing the wig back to the Man is also intended to suggest the Sergeant's fundamental change. The Sergeant, by giving back the disguise, is physically giving the means for the Man to continue to be free. His freedom thus allows him to continue rebelling against others. Therefore, the disguise acts as a symbol of the Man's ability to rebel. Gregory is clever in that it took the Man's disguise to "unmask" the Sergeant's true beliefs. "The Rising of the Moon" is a marvelous example of Irish theater.

It is a simple one act play, yet with so much depth and significance found throughout it. The action begins immediately, setting up a contrast between the law protecting Sergeant and the politically inclined free spirit demonstrated by the Man. Gregory use of character development is arguably her greatest accomplishment. Even more significant is how this character development takes place. The Sergeant's change of heart is reflected as being a direct result of the Man's deception through the use of his disguise. The disguise itself serves as a representation of the revolution, whose roots

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seem bound to Gregory's socialist ideals. Symbolically, the act of the Sergeant returning the disguise to the Man maintains that the Sergeant is now sympathetic to the cause. "The Rising of the Moon's" message remains clear as this text is an excellent reflection of the conflict between the British and Irish, attempting to apply a neutralist stance through the embrace of sympathy and understanding of fellow men.